

Guidance to single family dock applicants on contributions to NFWF to implement manatee conservation measures

For more information, access the interim guidance at:
http://verobeach.fws.gov/manatee_issues/manatee_guidance.htm

The interim guidance is designed to provide assistance to applicants in determining appropriate conservation measures for eliminating watercraft collisions to manatees only during the time period while “incidental take” regulations under the Marine Mammal Protection Act are being developed. The Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) believes that, in most cases, a single family dock applicant incorporating conservation measures into their project design would not likely cause incidental take of the manatee as a result of watercraft collisions.

The Service delineated relative risk areas or counties throughout Florida to determine the conservation measures necessary to ensure that incidental take due to additional watercraft will be unlikely to occur.

Manatee mortality data from 1974 through 2000 was analyzed to determine high, medium and low risk counties. High risk counties were defined as those averaging one or more watercraft-related manatee mortalities per year during the past ten years; medium risk counties averaged less than one, but more than zero, watercraft-related manatee mortality per year; and low risk counties had no documented watercraft-related mortality.

High risk counties include Brevard, Indian River, Martin, Palm Beach, Broward, Miami-Dade, Collier, Lee, Charlotte, Sarasota, Manatee, Hillsborough, Citrus as well as parts of Duval, Clay, St. Johns, Volusia, and Monroe. Medium risk counties include Putnam, Lake Seminole, Nassau, Flagler, St. Lucie, Glades, Hendry, Pinellas, Pasco, Hernando, Levy, Dixie, Taylor, Wakulla as well as parts of St. Johns, Volusia, and Clay. Low risk counties include Okeechobee, DeSoto, Jefferson, Franklin, Gulf, Bay, Walton, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Escambia and parts of Monroe.

A single family dock applicant choosing to contribute to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation’s (NFWF) Manatee Conservation Fund (see address below) must include a five percent administrative cost with the contribution. Contributions may be refunded at any time prior to the issuance of the Army Corps of Engineers’ permit. Once the permit has been issued, all contributions will be used exclusively for eliminating the potential of watercraft collisions with manatees or to implement other appropriate conservation measures and are non-refundable.

For single family dock applicants in high risk counties participating in the Manatee Conservation Fund, the amount of the contribution is \$546 per slip. The per slip contribution is calculated to provide for a ten percent increase in law enforcement (1.65 hours @ \$31.50 x 10 years = \$520) and a five percent administration fee to NFWF (\$520 x 5 % = \$26). Single family dock projects having more slips in the project design will be adjusted accordingly.

Medium risk counties experience approximately ten percent of the total manatee mortality that is measured in high risk counties. Accordingly, projects must provide additional enforcement at ten percent of the level of increased enforcement efforts needed for high risk counties. Based on this percentage, a project in a medium risk county provides 0.165 hour of increased enforcement per year over a ten-year period for each slip to ensure that incidental take is unlikely to occur.

For single family dock applicants in medium risk counties participating in the Fund, the amount of the contribution is \$54.60 per slip. The per slip contribution is calculated to provide for a ten percent increase in law enforcement (0.165 hours @ \$31.50 x 10 years = \$52) and a five percent administration fee to NFWF (\$52 x 5 % = \$2.60). Again, single family dock projects in medium risk counties having more slips in the project design will be adjusted accordingly.

For applicants in low risk counties, it is not necessary to include conservation measures as part of a proposed watercraft access project since there is no documented watercraft-related manatee mortality.

The process in which an applicant includes the contribution as a conservation measure of the project design is as follows:

1. The applicant submits the appropriate contribution to NFWF along with a cover letter that: (1) states the contribution is to the Manatee Conservation Fund, (2) includes the applicant's name, (3) includes the Corps' permit number, and/or (4) the county where the project is located. Upon receipt of the contribution, NFWF will provide written confirmation to the applicant.
2. The applicant submits a revised project description to the Corps which includes confirmation (copy of cover letter sent to NFWF) that the conservation measure has been incorporated into the project as described above. Included in the project description is a statement identifying where (what county) the funds are to be directed either for increased law enforcement or some other acceptable conservation measure. The documentation may be copied to the Service.

Send contribution to: Whitney Tilt, Director of Conservation Programs
Attn: Manatee Conservation Fund
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
1120 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 900
Washington, DC 20036

If you have any questions, please contact the Service's South Florida Field Office at (561) 562-3909.

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